ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Woreilu Woreda Administration
- Bureau of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- 013, 014 and 015 Kebele Administrators
- Development Agents of the kebeles

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Yewol watershed community who contributed their time, experiences and stories.

We thank staff members of Wollo University for their involvement and support.

INSPIRATION FROM YEWOL
FOR ALL OF US

We worked together. Our land is scattered. If we work individually, we cannot get there. Even the office of agriculture can't get there. Each of us contributed 60 days to build these structures on our farms and on those of our neighbors.

ALI AHMED | A FARMER FROM WOREILU DISTRICT

You cannot do it alone. I am from Ethiopia and want to see my country prosper. Watershed management is a very complex agenda, it requires multiple players and multiple skills. So I talked to as many people as possible, finding others who also had a vision and cared about the people and the environment.

DR TILAHUN AMEDE | ICRISAT

Others are still waiting. Almost every initiative that has come to the watershed has been beneficial. But not everyone has benefited. There are also possibilities to scale this approach out to other sites.

DERIB HASSAN | DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR FOR WOREILU
How communities joined hands to replenish the ecosystem that belongs to them

>> WHAT HAPPENED
Five years ago, communities in the dry highlands of the Yewol mountains found it difficult to grow even their staple crops. In the rainy season, rainwater gushed down the slopes eroding the soil. Free grazing of cattle and unreliable rain affected the productivity so much that crops began to dwindle along with their livestock. Migration was the only way out for some. Food shortage stalked the residents and it still is a reality for some.

>> WHAT WAS DONE
At a time when the people were struggling with the situation, a watershed initiative was started by concerned local researchers with the support of the government. The project brought in the needed change among communities to join hands and work together to replenish the dwindling resources of their homeland, Yewol, which in Amharic means ‘for all of us’!

HOW IT WAS DONE

1 Saving the soil
Terracing and contour ditches prevented soil erosion and increased recharge of groundwater

2 Mobilizing the community
Scientifically tested solutions ensured effectiveness and sustainability. Local byelaws were framed to support solutions

3 Capturing rainwater
Dug wells and farm ponds upstream for harvesting rainwater. Increased river flow downstream

4 Revitalizing the soil
Best agronomic practices and access to quality seed helped conserve the soil and get more yields

5 Growing new crops
Crop diversity increased by growing new and profitable crops

6 Livestock innovations
The project distributed crossbreed bulls and rams, and recruited artificial insemination experts

7 Market access
Forming farmer cooperatives improved farmers’ bargaining power

8 Climate resilience and improved livelihoods
Shift towards market-oriented crops

9 Upscaling avenues
Influence on policy makers

THE WAY THE PROJECT EMPOWERED FEMALE AND MALE FARMERS

Mechanism to save livestock from the effect of drought (% of households)

5140 Birr per annum earned from agroforestry products

6,250 Birr* was the average income of young farmers in the potato cooperative.

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Market access
Forming farmer cooperatives improved farmers’ bargaining power

Climate resilience and improved livelihoods
Shift towards market-oriented crops

Upscaling avenues
Influence on policy makers

60 days of work was contributed by each farmer for building terraces and other structures

7,500 hectares i.e. the entire watershed area was terraced by the community as part of the government’s Safety Net Program with technical support from ICRISAT

5 fold increase in irrigable land

Intervention group

Control group

Allocated additional budget for further scaling up/out

Started interventions of the same kind and showed interest to scale-up/out

Incorporated it into the Productivity Safety Net program (PSNP)

Improved food security

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